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AUTHOR	Kalck, Paul; Pillemont, Jacques
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ABSTRACT

From preservation of historical monuments to repair of existing buildings, architectural heritage seems to be a market with a future for France's building industry. The public's enthusiasm, along with greater appreciation of the "value" of cultural goods and their integration into a framework of economic development offer a favorable context for rapid expansion of the architectural heritage market. Despite this fact, architectural heritage has yet to become the focus of strategies permitting elaboration of a real supply policy. The designation "heritage architect" currently covers the following professional groups: (1) "head architects for historical monuments" (the elite body of architects entrusted with rehabilitation of France's historical monuments); (2) architects working solely in private agencies; and (3) civil servants with project management responsibilities limited to the historical monuments' upkeep. These different players are too dispersed to formulate an economic response to the increasing demand for their services. Exchanges among the three groups about historical approaches must be encouraged, the competencies needed for the field must be better identified, and the training needed to develop the specialized skills required for historical preservation must be developed and provided. Companies and training bodies have important roles to play in building and structuring the architectural heritage market and in providing the training required to develop a qualified workforce. (MN)

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THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE
A Market under Construction

From the preservation of historical monuments to the repair of existing buildings, interventions in the area of the architectural heritage seems to be a market with a future for the building industry. The public's interest and the perception of the economic and touristic stakes of the quality of the urban and landscaped setting offer a favourable context which is further reinforced by various initiatives from the building trades and the State. Nonetheless, the different players involved still seem to be too dispersed and isolated to create a supply adapted to the diversity of the demand. In addition, the preservation and enhancement of the architectural heritage requires specific skills and qualifications which must be analysed and defined if this particular market is to structure itself and gain its autonomy within the building sector.

The 'architectural heritage' includes the historical monuments—buildings which are listed or registered on the supplementary inventory of historical monuments—but also the heritage sometimes qualified as 'non-protected', 'vernacular' or 'local'. Coinciding in part with work on buildings more than fifty years old, the intervention on the architectural heritage is said to represent about one-third of the building sector's activity. But the market is not yet well defined.

THE KEY ISSUE: CREATING THE HERITAGE MARKET

In the absence of retrospective data on interventions involving the architectural heritage, the economic importance of this market and its evolution can only be evaluated on the basis of a broader activity sector, namely the intervention on existing buildings, which, beyond upkeep and renovation, includes the maintenance of industrial infrastructures and the rehabilitation of public housing. This sector showed considerable expansion between 1970 and 1986, when it went from 29 to 50 percent of the construction market. Its growth continued in the period which followed, albeit at a pace slightly slower than that of new construction (cf. graph p. 2). During the construction crisis of 1993-1997, it did not increase but nonetheless sustained its building activity, while new construction showed a sharp decline. Since then, the latter has shown a sharp rise and the share of maintenance activity has slightly declined. After the boom of the 1970s and 1980s, the intervention on buildings seems to have ceased gaining market shares.

The public's enthusiasm, along with the improved ability to appreciate the 'value' of cultural goods and integrate them in a framework of economic development, nonetheless offer a favourable context for the rapid expansion of the architectural heritage market. But outside the well-defined area of historical monuments, intervention on the architectural heritage has not gained its autonomy and has yet to become the focus of strategies permitting the elaboration of a real supply policy. As a result, the construction companies may well be neglecting a market with a future.

Various recent initiatives underline the emergence of an architectural heritage market. These target three categories of intermediaries playing an essential role in the creation of this market: the local communities and institutional contracting authorities, the prime contractor, and the individuals, who may be occasional contracting authorities. Since 1995, the 'Heritage Ribbons' (*rubans du patrimoine*) competition rewards communities which have carried out restoration operations. The first awards for the architectural rehabilitation of existing structures were introduced in 2001. The general public, meanwhile, has been targeted since 1998 with the annual "National Heritage Days". These different initiatives are not sufficient, however, for defining

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and structuring the architectural heritage market. It is necessary to develop analysis and dialogue among the contracting authorities in order to reinforce the legitimacy of the architectural commission in the heritage field, but also to specify the characteristics of the companies and the qualifications of the professionals intervening in this market.

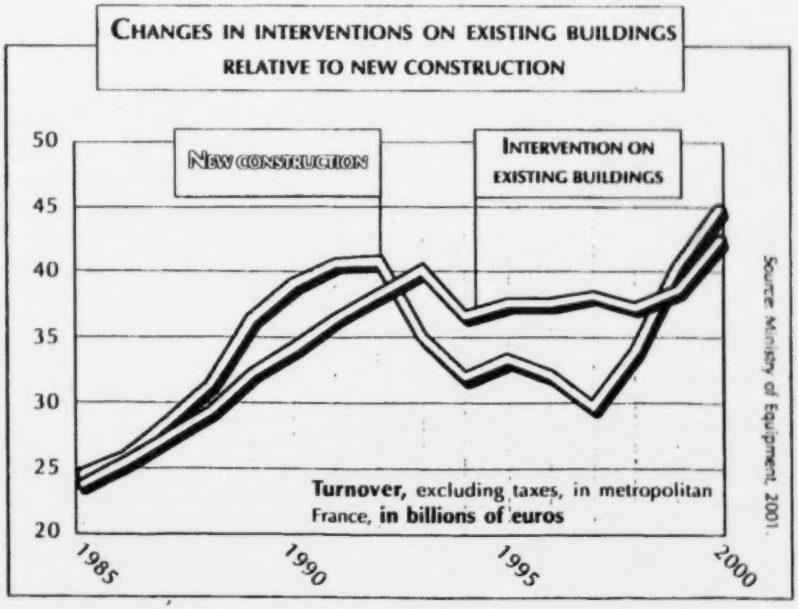
ARCHITECTS AS PLAYERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MARKET

In the face of a potentially significant demand for intervention on the architectural heritage, the players seem to be too dispersed and isolated to formulate an economic response. Whether clients enter directly into contact with the construction companies or address themselves to an architect, they should benefit from advice and services which add to the value of the building. The mission of the project management thus includes designing projects which respect the historic and architectural value of the site, and presenting these projects in such a way that they are understood by the client and well executed by the companies. With the exception of interventions on historical monuments, however, architects have only recently become interested in restoration or rehabilitation, as demonstrated by the fact that the rate of penetration of architects into the market of existing buildings went from 8 percent in 1982 to 20 percent in 2000.

The 'heritage architects', marked by their specialised training at the post-graduate centre known as the Ecole de Chaillot and grouped together in their own association, are concerned with exploiting the competences they have acquired in restoration and rehabilitation and would seem to have a privileged role to play in reinforcing the architectural commission in the heritage field. In practice, however, the designation 'heritage architect' covers three professional groups with different activities:

- The 'head architects for historical monuments' (*architects en chef des monuments historiques*) constitute an elite body to which the State entrusts the restoration of historical monuments. They are subject to particular constraints with regard to restoration. Often responsible for one or several 'major' buildings—large châteaux or cathedrals—they must pay particular attention to durability of the work carried out. Such buildings call for skills in conservation more than creativity.
- Two-thirds of the 'heritage architects' work solely in private agencies and earn a significant share of their revenues—on the average, one-third—with new construction. Presenting themselves as 'generalists', they are involved in creation on historic sites and appreciate the freedom of design and creation involved in operations of re-utilisation or redeployment of buildings. Depending on the agencies, they may be involved in all or part of the architectural heritage market: historical monuments as well as the areas surrounding them, the urban and landscaped heritage protection zones or the safeguarded sectors, or the non-protected heritage. If the activity on the heritage is, in general, held to be expanding, the greatest increase is found in the intervention on the non-protected heritage, estimated to be on the rise in 32 percent of the agencies and in decline in only 6 percent.
- The 'architects of the buildings of France', who are civil servants, have project-management responsibilities limited to the upkeep of historical monuments. Their advisory functions lead them to take into account the larger urban and landscaped environment and many of them see themselves as town planners.

Each of these three groups has a predominant vision of the architectural heritage as well as its own approaches to conservation and restoration, but these still leave individual architects a margin of freedom which allows them to assert their particular identities. Some approach the architectural heritage through the historical monuments. Others are involved in decisions concerning the development of architectural and landscaped areas, with the resulting need to reconcile creation and conservation. Still others often approach the architectural heritage in terms of the rehabilitation and re-use of buildings. These approaches give rise to different professional identities, but at least two factors reduce the distance between heritage architects. First of all, the possibilities for professional mobility between the different groups are considerable, and this facilitates communication and the exchange of experiences. Second, with in each group, the architects can diversify their activities by engaging in consulting or combining civil-service assignments and private commissions. The Association des architects du patrimoine (Heritage Architects Association), which brings together these professionals with their different itineraries and activities, could contribute to developing the exchanges necessary for reinforcing the architectural commission.



ENCOURAGING EXCHANGES ABOUT RESTORATION APPROACHES

The architects are willing participants in initiatives aimed at promoting the heritage—public-information events and trade shows, site visits, courses, talks, conferences, contact with school groups. They are open to the intervention of the organisations devoted to protecting the architectural heritage and consider that these generally do a good job of public relations, effectively watch over the heritage and collect precious information. The architects' proposals show that they are aware of the collective nature of the dynamics to be initiated in favour of the architectural heritage. They would like greater exchanges with partners intervening in restoration operations and feel that a better dissemination of competences is indispensable in order to avoid "closing the architectural heritage off in a ghetto, no matter how honoured and respected it may be". As a result, they would like to see more instruction about the architectural heritage in the schools, in the training of 'craftspersons' and in architecture schools. Some of them already contribute to such activity and this is an opening which should be encouraged in order to advance reflection on two problems often cited by architects: the upkeep of buildings and the care of the non-protected heritage.

Indeed, a number of architects consider that building upkeep poses a problem. State funding is inadequate and the contracting authorities, whether private or public, are not sufficiently convinced of the merits of maintenance, which is nonetheless more respectful of the authenticity of the heritage and less costly than restoration. Several initiatives bringing together all the partners—owners, architects, companies—to this end have been undertaken, such as, for example, the 'inter-professional protocol for the upkeep, conservation and enhancement of existing buildings' signed in 1997 by the Society of Joint-Ownership Architects. It seems, however, that the methods of intervention in this area still need to evolve and notably to integrate the dimension of preventive conservation.

The variety of viewpoints on the care of the architectural heritage is in itself a clear indication of the fact that the appropriate procedures remain to be developed in the direction of what is called the 'local heritage' (*patrimoine de proximité*) or 'vernacular heritage' (*patrimoine de pays*). Certain architects are opposed to the idea of a distinction between historical monuments and non-protected heritage; in their view, "There is no minor architecture, no minor heritage". Others accept the establishment of a hierarchy in function of the 'architectural interest' of the buildings. For them, maintenance and restoration procedures which are less rigid than those for protected structures would avoid discouraging the owners with projects entailing prohibitive costs. Still other architects opt for the 'vernacular' heritage in order to combat trends towards 'museification' and invent approaches which are more respectful of the authenticity which accounts for the value—but also the fragility—of this heritage.

The dialogue between architects, like the communication with the partners intervening on the architectural heritage, could also be based on a theoretical reflection but the diversity of the contexts and restoration projects and the multiple constraints involved in these operations constitute obstacles to such a process. For the majority of the architects, restoration doctrines do not constitute points of reference or guidelines which permit them to position themselves, analyse or, indeed, explain the premises of an intervention. The restoration project is the fruit of the confrontation of a given sensibility with an existing building. The weakness of doctrinal debate tends to leave the architects alone in their encounter with the uniqueness of the work and expose them to the vicissitudes of the project as well as the confrontation with the different powers that be.

BETTER IDENTIFYING COMPANY COMPETENCES AND MEETING NEEDS FOR SKILLED PERSONNEL

The architects cite two difficulties in undertaking restoration or rehabilitation projects: on the one hand, the linkage between the different segments of the architectural heritage market and the companies and, on the other, needs for skills. They complain of the small number of providers in the historical monuments market, which, in their view, explains the unsuccessful invitations to tender and long deadlines for getting projects underway. They consider that the competition between companies holding a 'historical monuments' qualification is sometimes inadequate and that, in addition, the narrowness of the market leads such companies to position themselves on other market segments and notably that of the non-protected heritage, where they have all the advantages in the face of a prime contractor concerned with the quality of execution of the work and sometimes tempted by the logic of "someone who can do the most can do the least". Such a logic is not without risks, however: in a report issued by the Centre scientifique et technique du bâtiment (Scientific and Technical Centre for Construction, CSTB), the president of the Groupement de monuments historiques (Union of Historical Monuments) expresses concern for the loss of the profession's identity "because of the increasingly frequent use of highly skilled 'historical monuments' labour in current rehabilitation projects calling for technical know-how and above all a form of work organisation which are completely different".

The qualification of the personnel and the organisation of the companies may also suffer from such confusion between historical monuments and architectural heritage, especially insofar as this also contributes to hiding the problem of companies which, without having a 'historical monuments' qualification, want to place themselves in the non-protected heritage market. For the architects, such companies should in fact specify the competences which would allow them to distinguish themselves and justify their desire to intervene on this heritage.

In terms of qualifications, most architects consider the companies' ability to carry out work on the heritage is inadequate, either because they have not sufficiently developed the key competences necessary for proper execution of the commission or because they have difficulties finding and replacing their skilled personnel. This scarcity affects in particular the labour force responsible for the shell and above all, the masons and carpenters, followed by frame-builders and roofers.

The architects are also critical of certain changes in the sector: the abuse of industrial products, the quasi-systematic practice of substitution at the expense of repair, the loss of competences. In their view, the mastery of traditional know-how is essential because it is also a means of acquiring broader qualities—having a good eye, a desire to fabricate, a sense of proportion. The knowledge of the materials and techniques of the past permits the choice of appropriate operations on buildings to be restored or maintained. This mastery must be sufficiently shared so that everyone can detect the way these techniques have been used on the buildings and make the right decisions about the projects. The dissemination of a 'culture of the past' is one of the conditions for raising awareness about the architectural heritage. Beyond the knowledge of past techniques and the mastery of the technical vocabulary, historical knowledge and the knowledge of styles are indispensable advantages. It is also necessary to possess specific know-how of conservation and restoration, whether these belong to the tradition of the crafts or integrate new technologies of cleaning, repair, preservation or reinforcement of materials.

AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR COMPANIES AND TRAINING BODIES

If the restoration of historical monuments is largely structured around a prime contractor, qualified companies brought together in a group and specialised schools, this is hardly the case where the non-protected heritage is concerned. The employers' organisations in the building industry have, however, taken initiatives to encourage the constitution and identification of an offer extended to the whole of the architectural heritage market. Thus, in 1998, the Confédération de l'artisanat et des petites enterprises du bâtiment (Federation of Building Crafts and Small Companies, CAPEB) created a vocational identity certificate (*certificat d'identité professionnelle*, CIP) specifically for the heritage field. In this context, self-employed entrepreneurs are offered a three-day training course dealing with the regulatory framework, the role of the main players responsible for the management and preservation of the built heritage and the history of that heritage, so that they can use the CIP to record the projects they have been involved in and the nature of their interventions. Under the impetus of the CAPEB, two university diplomas have also been created for craftspersons seeking to obtain qualifications in the area of the architectural heritage. Since 2001, the Fédération française du bâtiment (French Building Federation) has been offering training on "Past Architectural Heritage" which, upon presentation of three references for work on buildings of more than fifty years old, allows the companies to place the mention "Building Heritage" (*patrimoine bâti*) on their QUALIBAT qualification certificate. The FFB has also become a member of the Fondation du patrimoine (Heritage Foundation), which was created in 1996 to promote the preservation, knowledge and enhancement of the local heritage.

These initiatives aimed at building and structuring the heritage market remain fragmentary and dispersed, however. Outside of the Compagnonnage movement of craft guilds and a few specialised institutions which largely contribute to the perpetuation of traditional knowledge, the boundary between the qualifications necessary for intervention in the architectural heritage—which also integrate the new technologies—and the other construction-industry qualifications still remains unclear. Nonetheless, the rapid expansion of building training programmes and qualifications essentially orientated towards installation and assembly, and thus new construction, makes it necessary to insist that these qualifications are also useful to the heritage and in particular the non-protected heritage.

Paul Kalck (Céreq) and Jacques Pillemont (Cerfise)

FURTHER INFORMATION

- "Un contexte porteur pour la qualité architecturale des réhabilitations" [A favourable context for the architectural quality of rehabilitation projects], interview with Wanda Diebolt, head of the Ministry of Culture's Architecture and Heritage Department, *Le Moniteur des travaux publics et du bâtiment* no. 5093 (6 July 2001).
- Eric Baumelin and Daniela Canela, "Evolution des entreprises de restauration des monuments historiques" [Evolution of companies involved in the restoration of historical monuments]. Report of the Centre scientifique et technique du bâtiment (CSTB), March 2000.

SURVEY OF HERITAGE ARCHITECTS

At the request of the Architecture and Heritage Department of the Ministry of Culture and Communication, and with the support of the Organisation of Heritage Architects, Céreq undertook a study in late 2001 which was intended to analyse training supply and qualifications needs in the area of the architectural heritage. This study was comprised of two parts. The first, on which this article is based, sought to determine the expectations of the project management, notably in terms of the development of activities related to the architectural heritage and qualifications needs. To this end, Céreq, in collaboration with the Centre d'études, de recherches et de formation institutionnelle du Sud-Est (Cerfise), conducted a survey of 283 of the 700 heritage architects (*architectes du patrimoine*) who are graduates of the Ecole de Chaillot. It was carried out through a postal questionnaire, but also via an Internet site placed at the disposal of the heritage architects. This group does not cover the whole of the market, which remains open to non-specialist architects and other professions such as interior designers, who may intervene on their own when the operations do not require a building permit. The choice of addressing the survey to this population was thus guided by the desire to question experts in conservation, restoration, re-use and rehabilitation of the architectural heritage.
The second part of the study, aimed at analysing the training supply, will get underway later this year through enquiries carried out in the companies and training bodies.

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